

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01
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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5628

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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PASS ERDA FOR SIEVERING

USEEC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, UK

SUBJECT: WALTER MARSHALL LEAVES ENERGY DEPARTMENT

1. UNCLASSIFIED. THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY ANNOUNCED JUNE 27 THAT DR. WALTER MARSHALL, CHIEF SCIENTIST SINCE DEC 1975 ON A PART-TIME BASIS, HAS BEEN ASKED BY SEC STATE BENN TO RESUME FULL-TIME WORK (PRESUMABLY AS DEP CHAIRMAN) IN THE UK ATOMIC ENERGY AUTHORITY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. BENN'S REQUEST WAS MADE "IN VIEW OF THE IMPORTANT DECISIONS CONCERNING NUCLEAR POLICY THAT WILL NEED TO BE TAKEN IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND THE SIGNIFICANT ROLE OF THE ATOMIC ENERGY AUTHORITY IN THIS AREA".

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2. PRESS COMMENT NOTED THAT BENN "SACKED" MARSHALL, ONE OF HIS CLOSEST ADVISERS, BECAUSE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO MEN HAVE DETERIORATED BADLY OVER THE PAST YEAR, MAINLY AS A RESULT OF BENN'S REFUSAL TO TAKE DECISIONS ON THE FUTURE OF BRITAIN'S NUCLEAR POWER PROGRAM. MARSHALL IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN INCREASINGLY CRITICAL OF BENN'S RELUCTANCE TO ACCEPT BRITAIN'S LONGTERM ENERGY

SITUATION COULD BE SECURED ONLY BY MAKING MAJOR DECISIONS CURRENTLY. ALTHOUGH MARSHALL HAD BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN BUILDING A SUBSTANTIAL ENERGY DEPARTMENT RESEARCH EFFORT IN NON-NUCLEAR RESEARCH (ABOUT \$40 MILLION ANNUALLY) SINCE 1974, IT HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY APPARENT TO HIM THAT "RENEWABLE" ENERGY ALTERNATIVES CAN ONLY MAKE A SMALL CONTRIBUTION TO THE UK'S ENERGY NEEDS IN THE DISTANT FUTURE AND AT A HIGH PRICE.

3. UKAEA CHAIRMAN SIR JOHN HILL COMMENTED THAT HE WOULD BE VERY RELIEVED TO HAVE THE FULL-TIME ASSISTANCE OF DR. MARSHALL, WHO "WE HAVE NOT SEEN VERY MUCH OF FOR A COUPLE OF YEARS NOW". UNTIL A SUCCESSOR IS APPOINTED AS CHIEF SCIENTIST, MARSHALL WILL CONTINUE AS CHAIRMAN OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (ACORD) AND THE OFFSHORE ENERGY TECHNOLOGY BOARD (OETB),
END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. BEGIN LOU. COMMENT: MARSHALL'S DEPARTURE FROM ENERGY DEPARTMENT COMES AS NO GREAT SURPRISE. HE HAS MADE WELL-KNOWN HIS DISTASTE FOR WHAT HE CONSIDERS BENN'S FOOT-DRAGGING ON CONTROVERSIAL POLICY DECISIONS, PARTICULARLY AS REGARDS THE BRITISH NUCLEAR PROGRAM. GIVEN MARSHALL'S PRESENT FRAME OF MIND, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT HE MAY DECIDE TO LEAVE GOVERNMENT SERVICE ALTOGETHER WITHIN THE NEAR FUTURE. END LOU.
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BREWSTER

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